

PROGRESS REPORT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INTERIM COMMITTEE

**ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY
2005**

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Energy, Environment and Technology Interim Committee HCR 16 (2005)

Members of the Committee:

Senator Brent Hill, Co-chair	Representative George Eskridge, Co-chair
Senator Patti Anne Lodge	Representative Maxine Bell
Senator Tom Gannon	Representative Steve Smylie
Senator Curt McKenzie	Representative Joseph Cannon
Senator Gerry Sweet	Representative Ken Andrus
Senator Clint Stennett	Representative Bob Nonini
Senator Elliot Werk	Representative Elaine Smith

Staff: Mike Nugent, Caralee Lambert and Toni Hobbs

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Charge

The Energy, Environment and Technology Interim Committee is a two-year committee formed in 2005 pursuant to the authority of HCR 16. The resolution authorized the Committee to undertake and complete a study of environment, energy and technology related issues from both the statewide perspective and the national perspective. The Committee is directed to involve representatives of industry, agricultural groups, small businesses, consumers of electricity and conservation interests. The Committee is also authorized to retain the services of a consultant, within appropriated moneys, who is familiar with the energy and technology industry and who can provide necessary economic or other research that can assist the Committee and the Legislature in making an informed decision. The Committee was directed to make a progress report to the Second Regular Session of the Fifty-eighth Idaho Legislature.

Meetings

The Committee met in Boise on June 13, August 8, October 5 and November 15, 2005.

Scope of Study

At the June 13 meeting the Committee heard presentations about the state energy plan, from employees of the Idaho National Laboratory about programs they are undertaking, from the Public Utilities Commission about electricity pricing, transmission and reliability, and about power plant siting.

At the August 8 meeting the Committee heard from the Office of Science and Technology of the Department of Commerce and Labor, about PURPA wind projects in the Idaho Power service area, from Southeast Idaho Energy LLC which is proposing to site a coal gasification plant at the old FMC site in Power County, from Power County Commissioners about the coal gasification plant and energy facility siting legislation, and from the Mid American Energy Holding Company who is proposing to buy Scottish Power.

At the October 5 meeting the Committee heard testimony from the Department of Environmental Quality about their permitting process for power plants, from Ben Johnson and Associates about power plant siting laws in the western states, and from representatives of Canyon County opposing a statewide energy facility siting law.

At the November 15 meeting the Committee heard testimony from the National Conference of State Legislatures about energy policy in the states and country, from the Bonneville Power Administration about transmission in the northwest grid, from PacifiCorp about prototype batteries and new technology in the electricity industry, from the Pacific Northwest Economic Region about binational regional energy planning and the northwest, the Public Utilities Commission about their perspective regarding electricity transmission and the Idaho Farm Bureau about Idaho grown renewable fuels or ethanol, and from the President of Treetop Technologies about challenges facing the hi-tech industry in Idaho and what the legislature can do to assist them.

Recommendations

Regarding the energy facility siting issue, the Committee adopted a motion not to pursue statewide energy facility siting authority for this session but left open pursuing legislation to address legislation regarding transmission issues.

The Committee also adopted a motion to authorize the co-chairs of the committee to approach the Governor about updating the State's energy plan.

The Committee finally adopted a motion recommending that the state's energy policy include the development and use of biofuels.